

SOUTHEND BEACH HUT OWNERS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025
MINUTES

The Annual General Meeting of Members was held at 7.30pm on Thursday 27th November 2025 at the Methodist Church, The Broadway, Thorpe Bay.

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

The Chairman, Mr Simon Sterry, welcomed about 51 Officers and Members to the Meeting.

Apologies were received from:-

Terry Longman, Aron Priest, Sonia Blake, Berry Gibson

The Chairman began the meeting by asking the various Committee Members and the lease working party to present their reports. These have been reproduced in full in the minutes.

Agenda Item 1 - REPORTS FROM RETIRING OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

1 (i) LEASE WORKING PARTY REPORT

A verbal report was provided to the meeting by the Chairman.

He reported that as the discussions concerning the new Lease are hopefully, and finally, drawing to a close, he would provide a summary of the situation from when we started the process in 2023 to date, and would also include the latest information we had from the Council.

He advised, this has been a long-drawn-out process, with the Association waiting sometimes many months for the Council to update us on their position.

Members have been kept updated by information provided on the website, updates on our Facebook page and by newsletters. (Spring 24, Summer 24, Autumn 24, Spring 25)

Solicitors have been instructed at various stages throughout, initially to answer queries as to the rights of hut owners / lease holders in relation to the new leases, then to consider the first draft of the new lease produced by the Council in February 2025 and, very recently to consider the second draft and proposed licence Conditions which after a request, were sent to the Committee by the Council just over 3 weeks ago.

The whole process started at the end of 2023 when an email was received from the Council's Officer, Steve Newman, advising the Committee of the Council's initial thoughts relating to the drafting of the new leases. This was reported to the 2023 AGM.

Some Members will recall that the original leases expired in 2015 and since then the terms of the old lease have been 'holding over' with hut owners paying the annual rent (with no increases) which was last due at that time.

The Council's initial proposals included:

- Preference for just one type of lease (there had been 4 different leases previously / plus rental clauses in some leases)
- New (increased) annual lease rental amount, as there had been no increase for 10 years.
- 10% assignment on sale clause on all – already present in majority of leases
- RPI uplifts end and mid term
- Everybody able to rent out their hut

In January 2024 the Committee set up a Working Party to consider the way forward regarding the Lease discussions, and upon the request of the Committee a meeting was held at the Council offices.

Nothing further was heard from the Council until May 2024, when they sent further proposals to the Committee. These were reported to the membership in the Summer 2024 Newsletter.

Our response was sent to the Council in August 2024 following feedback from the membership and countering the various suggested changes.

- 10% assignment fee – we asked for less (n.b. But 10% already on majority of huts, 262 huts as opposed to 230 huts)
- Rent increases – suggesting a possible fairer way forward, depending upon which area / location the hut is in, to try and ensure in future that there was the same or similar rental for similar huts. (n.b. RPI inflation would mean at least 43% increase, Council not suggesting this).
- Subletting – expressing our strong concerns against this, (although recognising a few do wish to sublet) Suggesting a separate licence for sub-letting.
- Agreement on one lease term – 7 years.
- Requesting right to renew be added to Lease
- Asking for just one RPI increase
- Requesting terms relating to passing on of beach hut to family etc. remain as in previous lease
- Requesting information as to how compliance with lease clauses / conditions will be monitored.

Again, nothing further was heard from the Council until we invited Steve Newman to our AGM in autumn of 2024. He declined but advised that the Council had made progress and their legal team were putting the Draft Lease together.

After chasing the Council for an update, in February 2025, an email was received with the first draft of the new Lease, with their proposal that it start / be back dated to 1st January 2025 and the new rental charges would also start from then.

The Working Party and our Solicitors reported on the new draft lease and the Association's response was sent to the Council in April 2025.

It expressed our views on the first (poorly drafted) draft of the lease, which included:-

We made additional comments relating to our concerns about back dating the lease and rent due from 1/1/25 and how this would affect members and requesting the new lease start date be brought forward.

Again requesting 10% assignment fee be reduced, although the Council had made it clear this was unlikely to be agreeable to them.

Seeking reassurances that there would be no VAT implications.

Asking for information on the proposed new Fire Safety requirements clause.

Asking that any sub-letting Licence scheme minimise the impact of sub-letting on those who do not wish to let out their huts. Suggesting Conditions that the Council could consider be included within the licence.

Asking for option to renew after 7 years to give tenants more security

Asking for changes to wording to make certain clauses less onerous.

Seeking changes to wording of RPI process

Asking for information of signing process

October 2025 - As nothing further had been heard, an invitation was sent to Steve Newman to attend this (2025) AGM. Again, he declined but emailed on 31st October 2025 and attached a second Draft of the lease and a draft of the new Licence to Hire Conditions. He proposed this will come into effect from 1/1/2026 with new rents payable from this date.

He also responded to our email of April 2025, viz:-

"Drafts attached

No proposal to change VAT status here and although rates is outside the gift of the council it's a central government issue I'm not aware of any proposed changes.

Can't agree with the reasoning on the 10 % clause and it has been included; I have though adjusted the rent uplifts between former lease options as you suggested to reflect the change

Subletting - Largely agree on your licence points and have incorporated these

Subletting concerns about compliance - We share these concerns which is why we've removed the issue of subletting from the realms of the lease to being controlled under a licensing regime. This allows rules and regulations, rates and charges, even timeframe and uses to be changed flexibly in response to circumstance and ultimately to be cancelled individually at short notice, unlike with a lease. It promotes visitors and tourism whilst increasing our ability to challenge unwelcome activity. The draft you have is our proposed initial form of agreement.

I've amended the issue with the RPI review

I've granted an option to renew

Other suggestions have been incorporated into the draft where we can agree

Signing will be by individual appointment at the Council's Civic Centre, whilst I can't think of many reasons why an owner couldn't sign, we would consider any particular issues on a case by case basis.

[Access to beach / huts - We can't widen the responsibilities of the Council with regard to access I'm afraid, there are times when repairs or maintenance are required ??]

Insurance is indeed an obligation, that was an error in the original draft you saw, now amended"

Obviously, we have not had long to consider the two latest drafts, but initial thoughts on the two latest documents are:-

- i) Lease – Final draft. Few changes have been made, but again with our Solicitors for comment.
- ii) Draft License Conditions – seem reasonable, but with our Solicitor for comment

A response was sent to the Council advising we would report to and update our members at the AGM.

On Tuesday, 25/11/25, an email was received from SN advising he intended to send out letters to all hut owners relating to the new leases.

We immediately telephoned the Council and asked for a copy of the letter they proposed to send to all hut owners. N.B. This letter had been received and was read out to the meeting.

Members were advised that the letter refers to a link to view the proposed lease – this version of lease is incorrect, as it says 2025. It is a different version from the one received by us on 31/10/25. This is of concern and will be taken up with the Council.

It was also noted, there was no reference in the letter to when the invoice for new rental will be sent, nor any reference in the letter to the charge to be made by Council for renewing lease and when this will be due.

The Chairman advised the meeting we would be continuing to pursue these issues.

Questions about the lease would be taken at the end of the meeting. Members were supportive of the action taken by the Committee so far in relation to the lease renewal process.

1(ii) MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT – IAN ROBINSON

Ian provided a verbal report to the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Our paid-up membership currently stands at 410 as compared with 402 in November 2024. We've lost 2 members, and 10 new members have joined in the last twelve months.

The overall paid-up figure includes 2 complimentary memberships for SBC Officers who work closely with the SBHOA, 3 Honorary members, 2 complimentary memberships for huts owned by registered charities, and 1 Associate Member at this time. We have 9 member huts at Shoebury East Beach.

The current membership period expires at the end of March 2026. Subs for the next 3-year period to March 2029 will be due then. Reminders will be sent out at that time with full instructions for payment. I would ask that all members renew their subs promptly and to follow the instructions.

He reminded the meeting that renewing over 400 memberships is a very time-consuming task and it does help a lot if everyone pays promptly and provides the correct information.

TIDETABLES

Our 2026 tide tables are now available. In due course each hut will receive two free Tide tables for 2026 with the next newsletter. For anyone who is desperate to get their hands on one I have a few with me tonight.

These extra copies are chargeable at 50p each. Please don't ask for your two-per-hut free copies tonight though as it's not viable make separate arrangements.

Extra copies @ 50p each will also be available later either by post enclosing payment of 1 x 2nd class stamp per tide table, and a S.A.E. for their return, or hand delivered to my address with 2nd class stamps for payment as above or in cash at 50p per T/T, (but don't forget the S.A.E.)

COMMUNICATION

Communication with members is very important so we really do need up-to-date contact details for all of our members. This enables us to get in touch in the event of a problem with your hut, or send out newsletters, or let you know by email about any relevant hut matters, or social events which are of interest.

So, if you've changed your address, email address, mobile 'phone number, or landline 'phone number in the last year, please do let us know.

FACEBOOK GROUP

Our Facebook Group has been working very well this year.

We have 350 members, representing over 230 paid up member huts. Membership of the group is open to hut owning SBHOA members and their family and close friends.

The Group has proved very useful in getting information out to lots of members at the same time, such as details of road closures etc during seafront events.

If you use Facebook and haven't yet joined our Group you should seriously consider joining us. It is a private, self-contained group which is only open to our members & their families to join.

Let me know after the meeting if you would like to join and I'll email the joining instructions to you. It's very easy and you'll be able to participate in the Group as well as receiving posts about what is going on with the beach huts and our seafront.

Facebook Group members should be aware though, that if they cease to be SBHOA members, their Facebook Group membership will be ended.

The Chairman thanked Ian for his report.

1(iii) SECURITY OFFICER'S REPORT – JO COLLINS.

Jo provided a verbal report to the meeting.

She advised that unfortunately this year has been a busy one on the security front with lots going on mainly affecting huts on the beach rather than the promenade. In the early part of 2025, there was some damage reported to a few huts but it was not always clear whether this was deliberate

damage or just wear and tear over time. Some graffiti was also noted on a couple of neighbouring huts which was removed by the owners. Thankfully there has been no repeat of this since then.

Around June things started to get busier with more incidents and concerns being reported on Facebook, through the website/email address and also by phone.

July was a really busy month for calls and incidents but if we remember back then the weather was really hot so lots more people were at the beach or on the seafront. It was in July that a report of someone sleeping rough was received, this was the first of numerous reports of people sleeping rough in and around the beach huts this year. There is no data available for comparison so I don't know if this is a growing problem compared to other years but it feels like there has been more of it happening.

In addition to the growing problem of rough sleeping there has also been a fair amount of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the form of items being thrown at huts and rubbish being left on porches and balconies.

In August a series of burglaries was reported with at least three huts targeted all along the same stretch of beach in Thorpe Bay. All of the huts targeted had padlocks and hasps on the doors and the method of entry was by either removing the padlock or prising the hasps from the wooden frame.

Police also attended to assist one hut owner with people repeatedly sleeping in their hut and on another occasion, they attended and removed some of the left belongings from under a hut to deter the rough sleeper from returning.

In September some further rough sleepers were reported at East Beach and the ways to report were provided to the owner. It should be noted that the Association cannot generally make reports on behalf of hut owners but will provide the information needed to allow the owner to do it themselves.

Rough sleeping can be reported to Southend Council through Street Link, details of this are on the Facebook page or the Association website. Anecdotal feedback has been that after reports are made there is some follow up action from the rough sleeper team although they can only try and engage the person to receive help from the services available, if the rough sleeper does not wish to be helped, they cannot do any more.

In relation to crimes, crime prevention begins with each owner. Look at your hut and see if you think it would be more attractive to a burglar than another hut. Such things as does your hut look in better or worse condition than your neighbours? Those in worse condition are possibly easier to break into or not used as often therefore less chance of a burglar getting caught.

Do you have padlocks or internal locks within the door? This year the burglaries appear to be more prevalent in those huts that have external padlocks or hasps rather than those with locks which have bolts that secure on the inside. Just something to consider as generally beach huts are vulnerable so the key is to make yours as secure or difficult to break into as possible to deter a thief from targeting you.

On a more positive note, there have been some great things this year. One is that hut owners have been looking out for each other which has been really positive and good to see. Many are looking out for things that don't seem right and then taking the time to report it. The liaison and links with the Police have been good and they have responded when asked to in relation to incidents and ongoing concerns.

The Chairman thanked Jo for her report.

ITEM 1 (iv) HUT SALES REPORT – ANGIE STERRY

Angie provided a verbal report to the meeting.

This year has been an interesting one in terms of huts wanted to buy and also people wishing to sell.

Selling prices have consistently fallen since this time last year.

More huts have become available to buy, which has further deflated prices and has resulted in more of a buyers' market.

I suspect that following covid, when people were looking to secure something they could still enjoy without having to travel too far, the opposite has been happening with people maybe wishing to free up some money and take the opportunity to enjoy some adventures further from home.

I'm also aware of a few 'hutters' who have wished to sell before the new leases appear on our doormat!

Available huts at a good price are selling, albeit more slowly than in previous years. Hutters still looking to achieve a top price are, understandably, having to wait longer to find a buyer.

A person who was recently enquiring about available huts on my list, wanted to know if huts came equipped with mobile charging points and a full oven. And how do us hutters manage without a working fridge?!

For me, the simplicity of my hut without all the electrical trimmings is part of the joy. I'm sure you feel the same too.

Continued happy hutting to you all.

The Chairman thanked Angie for her report.

ITEM 1 (v) WEBMASTER REPORT – STUART JAMES

The website has now been operating in its new format for two years and includes practically all the data that was displayed on the previous site and much more.

There is an abundance of information for visitors and potential hut owners about Joining the Association, Huts for Sale, Questions and Answers, Stories of Interest and some Useful Links.

The biggest additions and changes are in the Members Area, which is now achieving up-to-date information regarding the Association's work and procedures, together with covering the many aspects essential for a beach hut owner referencing Security, Maintenance, Insurance and Tradesmen. I've also added a News Board for any rolling news which is also archived so articles can be referred back.

We get regular enquiries for hut purchases with some 12 in the last 6 months which keeps our Hut Sales Committee member Angie Sterry busy. There are also security enquiries and generic beach hut questions that also come via this

platform.

I am still endeavouring to publish a picture gallery page including combining some owner's contributions – thank you by the way to those who have forwarded some items already – however, I'm still trying to envisage a format that will be ongoing, vibrant and with regular updates.

Just as a reminder, I do not include member interaction platforms within the site as the SBHOA Facebook page performs a superb job in covering this with day-to-day snippets of information.

Ultimately, the direction the website takes will in some part be down to you the members and so during the course of the next few weeks, I'll be adding a 'Feedback Form' and would be pleased to hear from you with any views you may have – but don't panic! - the form will not be a multi-page life history request, but simply a few questions.

Overall, I believe the site is proving its worth for members and enticing those all important visitors which can only enhance the Association's credibility as the leading voice for Beach Hut owners in Southend.

The Chairman thanked Stuart for his report.

ITEM 1(vi) ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS REPORT – TERRY LONGMAN (part time)

In Terry's absence Simon read his report to the meeting:-

Car park closure - Earlier in the year we had complaints about the grass car park being closed left of Uncle Toms Cabin. It was explained at the time by the local authority that it is an over spill car park and will be possibly closed in winter and poor weather conditions.

Cycle path - We also saw the completion of the much-improved cycle path along the seafront.

Beach cleans - There has been a few successful beach cleanups this year by various groups With quite a lot of rubbish being collected and removed from the beach and around the huts.

Four shore-man - There have been some complaints of the lack of four shore man in attendance Shoebury and East beach. I believe unfortunately this is due to shortage of staff and the pier getting preferential staffing.

New cafe/restaurant - We have seen the new cafeteria (Beach House) completed at last adjacent to the already established east beach cafe which has brought a lot more life to the east beach area and is definitely worth a visit.

Tar bitumen product washed up on Thorpe Bay beach - Just recently there has been pieces of tar washed up on the beach which was reported to the National Coast watch Southend some 23.7 tonnes was spilt and is spread along the Essex coastline and being dealt with by the appropriate authorities, People have been advised not to touch the tar. Apparently due to an incident in Tilbury.

The Chairman thanked Terry for his report.

**ITEM 2 – TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ACCOUNTS PREPARED UNDER RULE 10E -
MICHAEL O'BRIEN.**

As Treasurer of the Beach Hut Association, I am pleased to present the financial report for the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

This report provides an overview of our income, expenditures, and financial position at year end.

At the start of the financial year, the association held a combined opening balance of £23,467.07, reflecting stable reserves carried forward.

During the year, our total income amounted to £231.18, derived from:

- Membership subscriptions totalling £160.00
- Donations £0.00
- Tide table sales £0.00
- Interest on the deposit account £71.18

Our total expenditure for the year was £4,053.31, allocated as follows:

- Newsletter postage, envelopes, and printing £893.23
- Meeting room hire £49.50
- Gift and donations £109.98
- Legal fees £1,680.00
- Tide tables £640.00
- Website fees £230.40
- Mobile phone £315.20
- Microphone and speaker equipment £135.00

This year also saw an important administrative change. In January we moved our banking from Santander to Metro Bank. This decision followed ongoing difficulties with Santander who misplaced essential paperwork and would not allow me, as the incoming treasurer, to communicate with them to resolve the issue. Metro Bank have since provided a far more efficient and member friendly service which has already proven beneficial.

As of 30 September 2025, the association's closing balance is £19,644.94 held entirely in the current account.

Based on our annual expenditure of approximately £4,000 and a membership base of around 400 beach hut owners, I have recommended that the membership fee be increased from £20 every three years to £30 every three years. This adjustment ensures that the association can continue to meet its operating costs while maintaining appropriate reserves for future needs.

Thank you for your support throughout the year.

There were no questions for the Treasurer.

The accounts were APPROVED by Members by a show of hands.

Michael explained he wished to step down from the Committee and would be grateful for another volunteer to come forward and take over the role of Treasurer. He confirmed he would try and remain until a successor was found.

The Chairman thanked Michael for his report.

ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE TO SERVE UNTIL NEXT AGM

The Vice Chairman, Grahame Harp advised the meeting of those Officers who had been nominated and had agreed to stand:-

Chairman Simon Sterry

Following a show of hands by those attending, it was AGREED that Simon Sterry be elected as Chairman. Grahame then passed the meeting over to Simon.

Simon advised the Meeting that the following had been nominated and had agreed to stand as Officers and Committee Members:-

Vice Chairman	Grahame Harp
Secretary	Alison Scott
Membership Secretary	Ian Robinson
Treasurer	Michael O'Brien
Huts Wanted / For sale	Angie Sterry
Web Master	Stuart James
Environment Officer	Terry Longman
Security Officer	Mark Gibson (new)
Newsletter Editor	Yvonne Rogers
Committee Member	Aron Priest
Committee Member	Jo Collins
Committee Member	Martin Pyke (new)
Committee Member	Neil Presland (new)

It was voted and AGREED that the above Officers and Committee members be elected. New nominees would be invited to attend the next Committee Meeting.

Newsletter – The Chairman explained that we needed additional help with the newsletter collating and producing content etc. Any assistance would be gratefully received.

The Chairman asked that if anyone else would like to help then please contact him or any Member of the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – TO ELECT ACCOUNT EXAMINERS UNDER RULE 10F

It was AGREED that this matter be referred to the Committee for approval.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – To CONSIDER Resolution 1

By way of explanation, the Chairman advised subscription fees have not been increased for many years, and in fact had been reduced on a previous occasion. Although the Committee have made savings, for example reduced room hire costs for meetings, holding meetings in member's houses and reduced AGM room hire costs, other costs were rising. Printing of the Newsletter and tide tables, website hosting, and in particular postage, were ongoing increasing costs and were significant.

Members would be encouraged to pay by Bank transfer using their hut number as payment reference. It was accepted that some members may wish to pay using alternative arrangements, cash / cheque etc. and this would be accommodated where possible. N.B. Payment will not be due until April 2026 (period 1/4/26 – 31/3/29).

Resolution 1 – To increase the Southend Beach Hut Owners Associations' subscription fee to £30 per 3-year period starting 1st April 2026 - proposer by Simon Sterry and seconded by Grahame Harp.

A vote was held and, unanimously by show of hands, Resolution 1 was AGREED.

N.B All 5 proxy votes received by the Chairman, supported the proposed resolution.

ITEM 6 – GUEST SPEAKER

The Chairman advised the meeting that Steve Newman from the Council had been invited to attend the meeting but had declined.

He had also asked if someone from the Council's homeless team could attend to provide information about rough sleeping in the area but had received no response.

ITEM 7 – AOB & ANY QUESTIONS

[N.B. As previously, names and hut details etc have not been taken / recorded within the Minutes. This is to enable the Minutes to be published on the website in the 'Members Only' section.]

AOB-

- i) Newsletter - Stuart reminded the Meeting that newsletters were now available to view in the member's section of the Association website.
- ii) Social Secretary – The chairman also advised Members are welcome to stand as a Social Secretary on the Committee. As it is hoped that in the future this role could be reintroduced.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to Members' Questions.

Question 1 – A question was raised concerning joint ownership of a lease/ owners living many miles apart etc. ?

It was advised as far as the Committee were aware, based on the proposed letter to be sent by the Council, the Council wished all named persons to attend the Council offices for signing the new lease. However it was drawn to Members attention that the letter did provide a contact number to telephone the Council if there were any question about the signing process.

Question 2 – There was a question about the rental RPI increase and those that had recently purchased their huts, and the % increase generally.

It was explained that the Council were able to propose any rental charge they thought fit. Following the RPI increases since the leases had expired would mean an increase of over 53% (As of October 2025). The increase to the proposed new annual rental amounts would be less than this, but would vary depending upon the lease held previously and the location and size of the hut.

Question 3 – What is the lease start date?

The latest email communication from the Council advised that the start date was expected to be 1/1/2026. However, the Committee advised the meeting that having checked the lease currently available to view on the Council website site, there is an issue with the dates. The on-line lease contains 2 start dates 1/1/2025 and 1/1/2026. The Committee would be bringing this to the Council's attention to try and avoid confusion and to ensure the correct date (1/1/2026) was clear within the lease. (*2)

Question 4 – When to sign the Lease?

From the Council letter it seems that the Council wish owners to start signing leases before the end of the year. However the Committee advised the meeting to ensure they were comfortable with the lease prior to arranging to sign.

Question 5 – Will we get a copy of the Lease?

Before signing, we think not, it seems if you want a copy you will have to print it off yourself. After signing the Council should provide a copy of the signed lease for individual records.

Question 6 – Where do we go to sign the lease?

The Council letter advises the process for lease signing – and a making an appointment to visit the Civic Centre.

Question 7 – A query arose from a member who wished to transfer their beach hut to their family, and could this be done at the lease signing process?

The Committee's view was that most likely the new lease would have to be signed by the existing owner and then the newly signed lease be transferred to the new family members. (with most likely 2 lease charges as well !!).

Question 8 – If one wished to transfer the lease to another, where do we get the paperwork from ?

The Transfer of ownership of a beach hut is done using a Deed of Assignment which is a legally binding document and is required by the Council. This would normally be prepared by a solicitor or by someone who is familiar with the process. The Council do not provide a proforma for this.

Question 9 – A query was raised by a member whose daughter was a joint lease holder but had now married and changed her name.

It was suggested that the contact number in the letter could be used to telephone the Council if there were any question about the signing process, however it was not thought a name change due to marriage should be a problem.

The Chairman suggested to Members they carefully checked the lease they are signing.

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There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked the Committee for their continuing support, thanked everybody for their attendance and wished everybody a safe journey home.

He reminded those attending that the RNLI (*1) had a stall available in the foyer selling Christmas cards etc. and as this was the chosen charity of the Association very much hoped those present would avail themselves of the opportunity to buy Christmas gifts and cards and support this worthwhile cause.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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Addendum :

*(*1) RNLI - The team from the RNLI Life boats Pier shop attended the AGM selling Christmas cards, calendars etc. and were grateful for member's generosity from sales and donations which raised approximately £262.75. Thank you.*

*(*2) – Dates on lease conflict - email sent to Steve Newman at the Council about this 28/11/2025.*